

York Region's Growth Management Initiative Phase 3 Public Engagement and Consultation 2008

Communications Strategy

Introduction

In Phase 3 of Planning for Tomorrow, The Regional Municipality of York's growth management initiative, the Region will consult with the public and stakeholders to obtain input on a preferred growth scenario and on the overall direction of the Region's growth management plan.

BACKGROUND

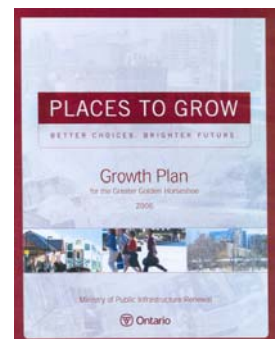
In 2005, the Province of Ontario released a new population forecast for York Region. York Region is anticipated to grow as follows:

	2001	2006	2031	2006-31 Increase
Population	759,000	930,000	1.5 million	570,000
Jobs	380,400	462,000	798,800	336,800
Households	222,900	275,500	509,700	234,200

In related initiatives, the Province introduced new legislation that will help ensure the management of growth, the protection of important agricultural and natural heritage lands and an ongoing commitment to enhancing the quality of life in the GTA.

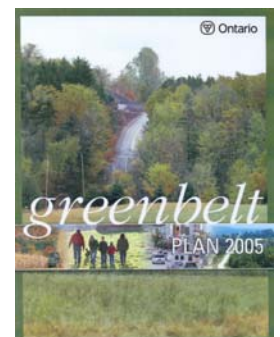
The Growth Plan

- Requires York Region and our local municipalities to accommodate 40 per cent of new growth through intensification of existing built up areas
- Requires regional centre densities not less than 200 people or jobs per hectare
- Requires new developments to meet densities not less than 50 people or jobs per hectare
- Focuses on developing urban centres supported by public transit corridors as the means of traveling within and between these growing centres



The Greenbelt Plan

- Preserves a permanent land reserve in south-central Ontario
- Permits only very limited new development outside of existing settlement areas
- Limits the fragmentation of agricultural lands
- Directs new growth and development to existing urban areas, towns and villages, in conjunction with the Growth Plan



CONTEXT

Creating strong, caring and safe communities is the vision of York Regional Council as detailed in Vision 2026. As part of the growth management initiatives, York Region has renewed its focus on sustainability that places priority on maintaining and improving our economic competitiveness, natural environment and healthy communities for the long-term benefit of residents.

Analysis**COMMUNICATIONS GOALS**

- Clearly articulate the information to audiences
- Frame the issues that must be addressed

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

1. Provide Regional Council with communications tools to help explain the unfolding details of York Region's growth management consultations and the resulting implementation over the coming years. These include developing communications materials, such as a media kit and brochure, undertaking media relations and helping arrange opportunities for elected representatives to speak directly to key audiences, including at the Open Houses.
2. Foster a public/stakeholder discussion on issues and choices facing the Region, enabling elected representatives and staff to:
 - discuss issues and identify solutions
 - create public consensus on public policy decisions
 - ensure decisions are evaluated against the triple bottom line sustainability principles of economic development, social equity and environmental value
3. Demonstrate to the public and stakeholders that the public engagement and consultations are inclusive and effective as a policy development process, helping York Region as a community respond to the issues and challenges in a manner that is most desirable.
4. Raise awareness among York Region staff of the public engagement and consultation process to assist them with queries posed by colleagues, friends and family.

TARGET AUDIENCES

- Members of York Regional Council
- Members of local municipal councils in York Region
- Local MPs and MPPs as well as relevant federal departments and provincial ministries
- Members of the public and representatives of stakeholder groups, including:
 - Staff members of local municipalities
 - Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade
 - Community groups such as local ratepayers associations
 - Environmental groups and agencies
 - School boards
- Contact lists collected during Phases 1 and 2
- GTA media
- Internal staff

TIMING

On December 15, 2005, Regional Council adopted a report outlining the overall direction, steps and timing of a Growth Management initiative to address the new provincial forecasts. York Region's plan provides for a public engagement and consultation process as follows:

- Phase 1 – Occurred throughout 2006
- Phase 2 – Occurred in Spring 2007
- Phase 3 – Fall 2008
 - Open House meetings:

Town of Markham, Canada Room	September 17, 2008
City of Vaughan, Council Chambers	September 18, 2008
Town of East Gwillimbury, Council Chambers	September 23, 2008
Town of Richmond Hill, OMB Hearing Room	September 24, 2008
Town of Newmarket, Council Chambers	September 25, 2008
 - Presentations to municipal council meetings
 - Additional stakeholder meetings to be included, as scheduled
 - Follow-up report to Committee and Regional Council by the end of 2008

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

Members of York Regional Council

1. Identify key information and provide a media kit, including key messages, fact sheets, media releases and newsletters to support communication directly to the public and stakeholders.

Members of the Public and Stakeholders

2. Communicate program objectives to residents and stakeholders via communications products such as a brochure, emails and fact sheets.

GTA Media

3. Provide news of program events, key messages and supporting information via media releases, backgrounders and fact sheets.

Internal Staff

4. Facilitate internal communications to York Region staff for delivery by the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and the Director of Strategic and Long-Term Planning.

KEY MESSAGES

- In the 25 years between 2006 and 2031, York Region's population will increase by approximately 570,000. An increase of more than 500,000 people in 23 years is like adding the population of our two largest municipalities, Markham and Vaughan, combined.
 - The provincial growth plan has forecast York Region's population to reach 1.5 million people by 2031.
 - To meet the province's 40 per cent intensification target, existing urban areas will have to accommodate approximately 87,000 more housing units – representing a populace about the size of the Town of Markham.
 - Substantial investment in new infrastructure and timely environmental approvals are required to build the city-region we have planned around our major centres and corridors.
 - Transit is a key element of intensification strategies. York Region continues to expand York Region Transit and Viva Rapid Transit since its Phase 1 launch in September 2005.
 - Additional transit initiatives include Viva Rapid Transit Phase 2 that will introduce dedicated lanes for Viva vehicles and funding from all three levels of government for the expansion of the TTC Spadina subway into York Region to the City of Vaughan Corporate Centre and the expansion of the TTC Yonge subway to Richmond Hill.
 - An additional 570,000 people will require greater investment in Human Services to ensure that York Region residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life. Immigrants need to be welcomed and integrated into the social and economic fabric of our communities.
 - York Region is committed to a growth management plan and a sustainability strategy that are fully integrated with planning and development practices and procedures.
 - The sustainability strategy will provide a framework for making decisions about growth management that protects and maintains the economy, environment and community.
 - To conform with provincial policy and legislation, including the *Places to Grow Act*, the *Greenbelt Act*, the *Oak Ridges Moraine Act*, the *Source Water Protection Act* and the *Provincial Policy Statement*, York Region is required to amend its infrastructure master plans and natural heritage system plans – which will be incorporated into York Region's *Official Plan*.
 - Throughout the amendment process, York Region will engage the public and involve all stakeholders from diverse disciplines in discussing concerns and options with the goal of obtaining effective and workable solutions.
 - York Region is coordinating land use planning with updates of the Region's master plans for Water and Wastewater, Transportation and Cycling and Pedestrian. York Region is also updating our Human Services plan and preparing a 25-year fiscal review of our Human Services requirements.
-

Communications Program

MEDIA KIT

- Key messages / Speaking bullets
- Fact Sheet (see below)
- Media Releases (see below)
- Internal communications (see below)

KEY MESSAGES

- Prepare key messages in bullet format for Regional Council

FACT SHEET

8½ x 11 single or double-sided paper with York Region logo and Planning for Tomorrow banner, maps and visuals where appropriate, for use as a “leave-behind” at speaking events and as a backgrounder for media

- Generic overview for all audiences and specific topics as needed
- Maps showing protected areas

MEDIA RELEASES

- August 15 - Public Service Announcement (PSA) for community listings and periodical publications
- September 10 – Media Release and Backgrounder to announce consultations
- September 15 – Media Advisory inviting media to the Open House meetings in Markham (September 17) and Vaughan (September 18)
- September 22 – Media Advisory inviting media to the Open House meetings in East Gwillimbury (September 23), Richmond Hill (September 24) and Newmarket (September 25)
- November 20 or December 18 – Media Release conveying results of report to Regional Council

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Work with GTA media to promote entire initiative. Promote initiative in advance and follow up media advisories with telephone calls to media, reminding them of the Open House meetings
- Arrange interviews with key spokespeople, including the York Region Chairman, the Chair of Planning and Economic Development Committee and senior staff

BROCHURE

- For distribution to participants at events
- For distribution to stakeholders via mail or email
- For posting on York Region’s corporate website

WEBSITE

- Showcase the Planning for Tomorrow website by placing a link to it (with a graphic) on the York Region main page
- Enhance website with information, graphics and full instructions on how to become involved in the public consultations and how to provide feedback

YORK BEAT AND KNOW YORK SESSIONS

- York Beat article – to ensure internal staff are aware of the upcoming Open Houses
- Know York lunch'n learn session – to raise awareness of internal staff

INVOLVEMENT OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES AS CHAMPIONS

- Chairman's letter to Mayors outlining the consultations and asking for their support
 - Invite the Chair of Planning and Economic Development Committee, Committee members and members of Regional Council to participate in speaking opportunities within their respective jurisdictions when opportunities arise, such as at the Open Houses
-

Evaluation

1. Media coverage, including any increase in media calls, editorials and articles and the extent to which our key messaging are conveyed
2. Nature and extent of public inquiries and comments via telephone and correspondence
3. The degree of interest and co-operation shown by community and groups, municipal and other stakeholders
4. The level of public support for the resulting recommendations

PREPARED BY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS, OFFICE OF THE CAO